



DCH Team,

I hope everyone is doing well and you and your families are staying safe and healthy.

September has been quite a busy month for the Department, and it makes me proud to see the entire DCH team continuing to engage in the critical work to support the Georgia citizens who rely on our services. Every division and office within DCH is greatly impacting the communities that we serve in the most positive way possible, and I thank you for your diligence and dedication in forging ahead and getting the work done.

One of the key projects on which DCH has been focused for much of the public health emergency is staffing augmentation and the recruitment of nurses, physicians and other clinical and non-clinical personnel around the state to better assist the hospitals and medical facilities who are working tirelessly to mitigate the spread of the virus. It has been a huge task and I know Georgians are grateful! Thank you to our Chief Compliance and Technology Officer Joe Hood, as well as Shawn Walker and the Program Management Office – and so many others who are reading this – for all of the great work.



In case you missed it, earlier last week, Governor Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp joined Monica Kaufmann Pearson to release a [public service announcement](#) encouraging Georgians to learn more about the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine. With the recent surge of the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus, I too think that it is important that we all remain vigilant in making sure we are properly educated on how the vaccine can protect us, our loved ones and our healthcare professionals.



In the three months that I've been here at DCH, I have to say that one of my most enjoyable experiences has been having the opportunity to meet some of you through "Coffee with Commissioner." We conducted two meetings this month, and it was truly a pleasure learning about the projects you're

working on, putting faces with names, and getting a better understanding of how you think we can work to enhance operations internally. For the attendees, please know that I have noted your comments, your feedback and your thoughts – and your viewpoints were greatly appreciated. For those who were not able to attend this month, I will continue to work with the Communications team to schedule more meetings. It is my goal to meet as many of you as I can, particularly given our mostly virtual environment.



As I mentioned previously, we've had a very busy month, and this issue of DCHNOW! is representative of some of the work that has been happening across the agency. This month, we are spotlighting the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) team. The NEMT program plays a crucial role in helping our members get to and from their medically necessary appointments. Also, RAP BACK has officially kicked off, and our Deputy Inspector General, Nigel Lange, gives us additional insight as to why this program is so important for the state.

Let's also keep in mind that the Georgia State Charitable Contributions Program (GASCCP) is now underway! This year's campaign, which takes place between September 16, 2021 – November 16, 2021, encourages each of us to **"Be A Superhero, Give!"** GASCCP is an important way in which state government employees are able to give back to charities within our communities. You can view the list of charities, learn more about this year's program, and make your financial pledge to the charity of your choice by visiting the online giving platform. I hope that we all can work together to make this year's campaign a huge success for the agency!

Before I close, I want to take a quick moment to recognize a few employee milestones in the department within the past month:

- **Five-Year Anniversary**
 - Deborah Herring
 - Gladys Paul
 - Malcolm Wells
 - Donna Lee
 - Sharon Byrd
- **10-Year Anniversary**
 - Latonda Oladapo
 - Catherine Bradfield
 - Kiesha Payne Holloway
- **15-Year Anniversary**

- Tijuwanna Wright

I'd like to congratulate each of you for your service to the department and the state.

Finally, I will reiterate that no immediate changes are in place to physically return to the office as we continue to determine the appropriate environmental plan that works for our people. The office is open for those of you who have to come in periodically for on-site services. As an additional measure of safety, the Georgia Capitol Police maintains a physical presence on Lower Wall off Kimball Way from 6am-10am and 2pm-6pm if this resource is needed.

If you have any questions for me, please feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear from you.

Thank you for all you do for the communities we serve.

Caylee

caylee.noggle@dch.ga.gov



DCH SPOTLIGHT – Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Team

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Manager Kimberly (Kim) McKnight has not had the opportunity to work at the 2 Peachtree Street building. In March 2020, James Peoples had just taken on the new role of Director of Provider Services when Kim was hired to take over the day-to-day workings of NEMT. For Kim, going through the DCH onboarding process, and then heading right into the remote work environment did not present an issue. As a veteran within the NEMT industry, she was more than prepared and ready to get to work.

As a little background, NEMT services are defined as medically necessary, cost-effective transportation for any eligible Medicaid member (and escort, if required) with no other means of transportation. NEMT is a ride-share program and multiple members system where brokers are contracted to work within the five established regions of the state to provide transportation services to members. DCH currently has two brokers: ModivCare and Southeastrans Inc.

“I started in non-emergency medical transportation back in 2003 with Southeastrans,” says Kim. “I think one of the greatest advantages I had coming to DCH was that I was already familiar with the team here because I had already worked with them prior to accepting this role. Of course, it was a little different learning the dynamics of the agency, but having an established relationship with a team that was already in place made my transition from the broker side a lot easier.”



Kimberly McKnight



Stacie Ramsue

And, speaking of team, NEMT consists of four team members, inclusive of James and Kim. While Kim commends James on being a wonderful leader and teacher when it comes to all things NEMT, she also notes that the other two team members are also very valuable contributors to the success of the program:

- Stacie Ramsue – Compliance Monitor III – Stacie recently celebrated seven years with DCH, and serves as a liaison for Exceptional Transportation Service (ETS), Open Records requests, reporting reviews and a myriad of other responsibilities including research and handling payments from the Department of Family and Children’s Services for ETS transports.

- Tonya Malcolm – Compliance Auditor II – A 21-year veteran with the state, Tonya is responsible for managing customer service, addressing Constituent Service concerns, day-to-day trip monitoring, reporting reviews, and other NEMT responsibilities.



Tonya Malcolm

“The work that Stacie and Tonya do for this team is immeasurable,” continues Kim. “They both have a wealth of knowledge that would be very difficult to replicate. Coming from the broker side, I’m so grateful to have inherited a team of individuals that I know and respect as experienced professionals in the industry.”

Looking ahead, Kim is anxious to implement new projects, while also keeping the NEMT program rolling along the smoothest path possible. Additionally, Kim is working as DCH’s lead transportation liaison with our other state agency partners to include: Georgia Department of Transportation, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Health, and Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency .

There are two initiatives that are top-of-mind and simmering in the pipeline: collaborating with the brokers on an improved urgent care transportation process, an agenda item that has become essential – especially over the past year-and-a-half; and completing audits for the NEMT program to better understand what’s working, and further assess areas of opportunity for improvement, growth and advancement.

“I have really been enjoying my time here at DCH,” says Kim. “My greatest satisfaction comes from the work I do daily with my team to resolve issues. The problem-solving aspect is quite fulfilling because of the critical thinking we put into our processes. Our team consists of forward-thinking people who are consistently seeking long-term resolutions so that we don’t continue to experience the same issues over and over again. We understand the importance of the work we do, and the people that we serve,

and that's what ignites the fire in us to keep progressing. I appreciate the fact that everything we do, we do as a team for the betterment of our members."



“RAP BACK NOW IN FULL EFFECT”

On August 30, 2021, an additional safeguard designed to protect Georgia long-term care facility (LTC) residents and their families was launched. RAP BACK , short for Record of Arrest and Prosecution Background, officially kicked off on that date, and is now being implemented by DCH.

For the past three years, the Office of Inspector General has partnered with the Healthcare Facility Regulation Division to develop a strategy and an implementation plan around legislation that was initially signed into law in 2018. That bill, Senate Bill 336, allows for the ongoing monitoring of certain individuals who are subject to fingerprint background checks.

On April 28, 2019, Governor Brian Kemp further expanded on that legislation by signing House Bill 91 into law, which allows the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to retain an applicant’s fingerprints for purposes of the Georgia Long-term Care (LTC) Background Check Program. Those fingerprints will remain in the system for as long as the individual is employed at an LTC.

And why exactly is RAP BACK important? Nigel Lange, Deputy Inspector General for DCH, who has been working with his team to get the program off the ground, offers the best answer:

“RAP BACK is a much-needed tool because it allows for the ongoing monitoring of all employees who have direct access to one of our most vulnerable populations,” says Nigel. “With the retention of those fingerprints, our hope is that this program will serve as an added layer of protection for those citizens residing in long-term care facilities.”

With the implementation of RAP BACK , owners, administrators, and direct access staff who are employed by an LTC will now have their fingerprints retained. If an individual has a change in their criminal history record information at any point during their employment, DCH will be notified. DCH will then notify the employer of an arrest and review the employee’s determination status. If the arrest is for a covered crime, an unsatisfactory determination will be made, making that employee ineligible to work.

For individuals employed prior to August 30, they are required to get fingerprinted in order to be enrolled into the program. As an additional note, **all** owners, administrators,

and direct access employees must undergo fingerprinting and background checks before employment can be approved at an LTC.

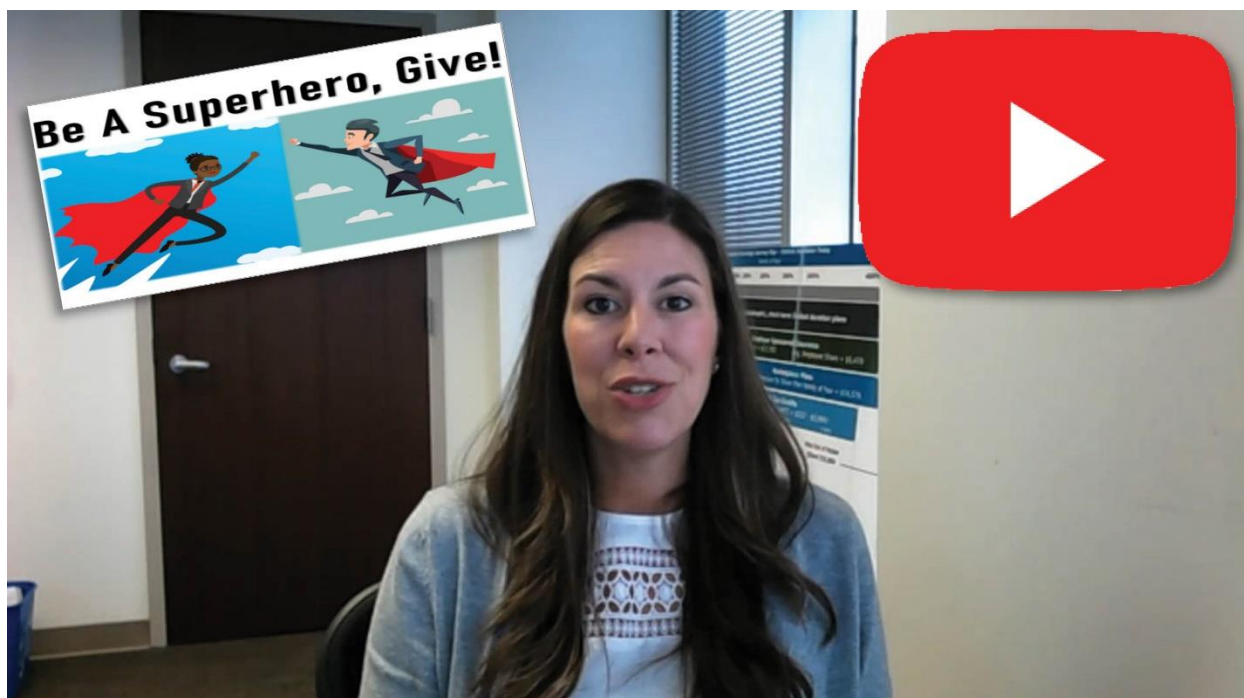
Although RAP BACK has been in full swing for just under a month, one thing that DCH can brag about is being the first state agency to go live with the program.

“As an agency, I guess you can say that we are kind of the pioneers when it comes to RAP BACK within the state,” continues Nigel. “With us being the first to implement, we can work through the kinks, perfect the process, and make eventual execution a lot easier for the agencies coming behind us. Our priority is always the well-being of the citizens that we serve, and if that means taking the leap and testing out important programs like RAP BACK first, then we are more than willing to lead that charge.”

For additional information regarding RAP BACK, please visit the [FAQs](#) found on the OIG page of the DCH website.



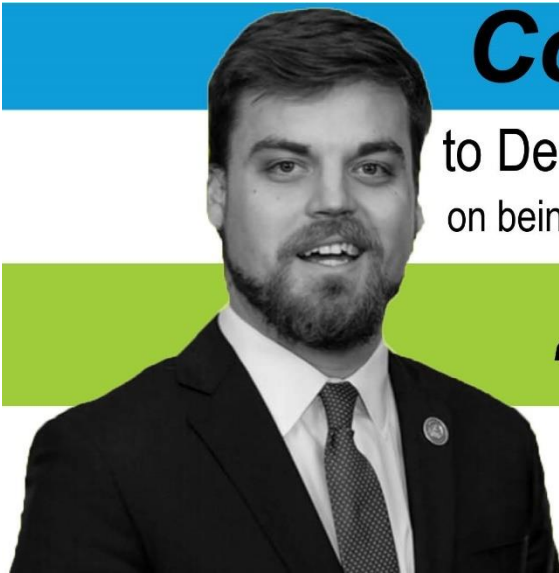
Georgia State Contributions Program – “Be A Superhero, Give!” Kicks Off!



September 16th was the kickoff for the 2021 Georgia State Charitable Contributions Program (GASCCP). Between now and November 16th, Georgia state employees can easily donate to charities of their choice through payroll deductions or one-time donations.

This year's theme is “**Be a Superhero, Give!**” The GASCCP provides us with another way to support our fellow Georgians while reaching towards our goal of **A Healthy Georgia**. Every little bit you can give makes a difference in our communities!

Watch Commissioner Noggle's full announcement at [this link](#). You can donate to your chosen charity now via the online portal found [here](#).



Congratulations

to Deputy Commissioner, Ryan Loke,
on being named one of the University of Georgia's

40 Under 40!

Read More!



Congratulations

to Chief Financial Officer, Lisa A. Walker,
on being elected the new

President

of the Georgia Fiscal Management Council (FMC)!

The FMC is a nonprofit organization comprised of representatives from each state agency whose roles entail the fiscal management of their respective departments. As the new president, Lisa will continue to lead the council's charge of promoting the efficient management of state government resources, as well as promoting the increased knowledge of governmental financial procedures and practices.

Lisa's elected status was announced on September 22 in Savannah, GA during the council's annual training conference.



Final Reminder:

The Governor's ***Mandatory*** Cyber Security Awareness Training is ***due by Thursday, September 30.***

Please **check your inbox** for the notification from **DCH Academy** for additional details.



2021 COLLEGE COLORS DAY



Kudos to You, Teresa!



“Thank you to Teresa for being proactive and filling in the gaps when our office was experiencing a shortage of staff...”

From: Itovia Evans

This month’s KUDOS SPOTLIGHT GOES OUT TO....

... Teresa Fuqua! Itovia Evans, Business Operations Manager of Georgia Boards of Dentistry and Pharmacy, sent Teresa a **KUDOS** for her work as the first line of contact for the Georgia Board of Pharmacy and Georgia Board of Dentistry.

During the pandemic, both offices experienced a shortage of staff along with an increase in applications and phone calls. Teresa noticed the backlog of work that needed to be done, and she took on additional tasks without question or direction to do so. On top of answering busy phones, she started processing requests, researching inquiries, and completing other tasks. Itovia thinks Teresa’s positive attitude makes the stressful job seem effortless. She says Teresa is an important piece of the puzzle that allows the Boards to continue serving the state – and we agree!



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

Celebrating
HISPANIC HERITAGE
Month

SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15, 2021



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

World Suicide Prevention Day

SEPTEMBER 10, 2021





COVID-19

Get the latest updates about vaccines, testing, how to protect yourself and get care: [COVID-19 and vaccines](#).

Looking for care options? Start with an [e-visit](#) to share your symptoms and get guidance for care. Or, to talk to an advice nurse 24/7, call 1-855-512-5997.

There's still time to earn your 2021 Wellness Program

FIVE SIMPLE ACTIVITIES
TO EARN UP TO
\$1,000*

[Click to learn more.](#)



The 2021 Wellness Program ends November 30, 2021. There is still time to reach your health goals by completing our five-step wellness program. Each member and covered spouse who completes the Kaiser Permanente Wellness Program is

eligible to receive a **\$500 reward card**, up to \$1,000 per household.

Click to learn more:

<https://my.kp.org/shbp/wellness-program/>



Fall is a great time for strolling in Georgia



Walking is one of the easiest ways to get the exercise you need for good health. A brisk, 30-minute walk each day can help you feel better and have more energy. It can help you lower your risk of disease. Walking is gentle enough to accommodate many health issues, doesn't cost any money, and can be done almost anywhere.

Follow the link below for more information, including getting started on your walking plan, how to fit a walk into your workday, and walking safely.

[Learn more about walking for exercise.](#)

Is it a cold, the flu, or COVID-19?

The coronavirus and the flu can cause similar symptoms. Before visiting a Kaiser Permanente facility for testing or in-person care, you should first schedule an e-visit, phone appointment, or video visit. Our clinicians can help determine if an in-person appointment or COVID-19 testing is needed.



[Learn more.](#)

Throughout the flu season, Kaiser Permanente members can get a no-cost flu shot during any doctor visit or at one of our [designated flu shot locations](#).

COVID Testing

Coming to most Kaiser Permanente Medical Offices

COVID-19 testing is conveniently located inside most of our Kaiser Permanente Medical Office Buildings. Members must first be evaluated by a provider or by completing a simple e-visit on [kp.org](https://www.kp.org). Testing is done at most locations, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. — 4 p.m. EST. Visit [kp.org](https://www.kp.org) for details on COVID testing.



Improve your sleep habits for better health

When you sleep, your mind and body are hard at work on your overall health. For example, certain stages of sleep allow us to learn and remember. Sleep also helps us fight infection and prevent heart problems and diabetes. If you're dealing with a conflict or life change, sleep can help you control your emotions. Having enough sleep helps lower stress, improve your mood, and keep your weight healthy. Over time, lack of sleep can hurt your health and relationships and cause accidents behind the wheel or on the job. The good news is you can learn new habits to improve your sleep.



Healthy habits for better sleep

Sleep loss is often a result of bad sleep habits, illness or sleep disturbances. Here are tips to help you sleep better:

Be consistent with your sleep schedule. Go to bed at the same time every night and rise at the same time every morning, including weekends. Don't nap after 3 p.m. or longer than an hour.

Exercise early. Give your body at least two hours to relax before bedtime.

Relax before bedtime. Try listening to music, reading or taking a bath. Stay away from smartphones and tablets, which emit blue light and can keep you awake.

Skip or limit the following:

- **Caffeine and nicotine.** They stimulate the body and can take up to eight hours to wear off.
- **Alcohol.** A drink may make you feel sleepy, but it prevents deep sleep.
- **Large meals and drinks at night.** Too much food can cause indigestion and prevent sleep. More drinks also means more trips to the restroom.



Burn more fat during your walking workouts with these simple tips!

- **Walk and run in intervals.** Alternate moderate walking with fast walking.
- **Go for the incline.** Walking uphill can help you torch up to 30% more calories.
- **Get the perfect soundtrack.** When you walk to your favorite music, you'll be more motivated to finish your workout!
- **Change your terrain.** Stepping on a variety of surfaces challenges the muscles of your body in new ways.

To learn more helpful tips about maintaining a healthy lifestyle, visit BeWellSHBP.com/GetMoving or call a well-being coach at **888-616-6411**.